Mor£as protests when you speak of his healthy look and declares that he is 'Very ill," When you look at him more closely, you see in fact that the apparent "health" is only a rather nasty puffiness. He is just the way I have always seen him, scrupulously dressed, careful in his speech, and constantly turning up his mustache with a twist. Every time he addresses me, his big cockatoo eye caresses me in a way that stirs me. I should like to tell him how much I like his poems, but cannot produce the least compliment. He speaks of Victor Hugo with a slightly disdainful arrogance, which, however, is only a pose; he says he prefers Lamartine to him and recites some of his lines, which, picked out in this way and warmed by that brazen voice, seem, indeed, full of ambrosia. He does not talk much, remains unaflFected, does not insist on silence all around him, and talks only to a few at a time.

Philippe Berthelot produced, as usual, the easy paradoxes of a superior mind. The ruin of San Francisco is "an unimportant little event'*; the eruption of Vesuvius likewise; the May Day strike "'exists only in the imagination of the frightened bourgeois"; the Bonmartino trial is "a very banal news item, which attracts a little more interest than the usual news items only because the names are Italian." And so on. Moreas inclines somewhat toward this failing too, which belongs to three fourths of the literary men and intellectuals of today (Paul Valery, Gourmont, Viele-Griffin — I have chosen the most dissimilar men). There are few failings more tiresome to me.

Monday

Yesterday at about six there came back to see me that preposterous little fop named R. L., whose intrigue finally succeeded in slipping a rather long essay into the *Ermitage.* Yet he is not stupid, nor unpolished; but I consider it impertinent that at the age of nineteen he should make me read his sixty pages without having read a single one of mine. He

comes to me not because he is drawn, but simply to push himself and because he has understood that I could get him into the *Ermitage.* *I* shall have it out with him if he returns.

2 May

Jammes writes me on sky-blue paper a typical parish priest's letter, in which he reminds me of Pourceaugnac's doctors trying to persuade him that he is ill.[28] Perhaps I am about to enter paradise, but not through the door he thinks. "You seem to me restless," he says, 'like a cork bobbing on the water." I am restless when I can't work as much as I want. (I am keeping the draft of the letter I am writing him.)

[28] In Moli&re's comedy ballet *Monsieur de Paurceaugnac,*